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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Closer U. S.-Canada Ties Needed

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By Drew Pearson

WHILE CANADA is debating the pros and cons of cooperation with the United States, it might be a good idea for the United States to consider ways of firming up a friendship which basically has existed for over a hundred years but which has been subjected to the strains of neglect and friction.

To that end, I respectfully suggest to the President and Congress that we invite Canada to send one non-voting delegate to participate in the deliberations of the United States Senate and another in those of the House of Representatives, with the suggestion that two United States delegates also sit in the two houses of the Canadian Parliament, without, of course, the right to vote.

This may sound like a revolutionary proposal. However these are revolutionary days when it comes to missiles and weapons, and political advance must move fast to keep abreast of the modern technological world.

Already, Canadian military men enjoy far greater authority over the destiny of the United States than a Canadian delegate could have by sitting in either house of Congress. Today, a Canadian Air Force officer must be consulted before the United States pushes the button which starts an attack on an enemy bomber squadron or missiles approaching from the north.

And on one breathtaking occasion, a Canadian officer held in his hands, and in his alone, the decision whether the United States and Canada would go to war.

The Canadian was Air Marshal C. Roy Slemon who was in command of the North American Air Defense Command on Oct. 5, 1960 when, at 3:15 p. m., there flashed on the ballistic missile early warning system from Thule, Greenland, the terrifying warning. "Massive ICBM attack is under way."

It was up to Slemon to decide whether to send several hundred SAC bombers on their way to retaliate against the cities of Russia and whether to push the button launching long-range missiles. He had exactly 17 minutes in which to make this decision.

Instantly, he asked for a report from Washington on the whereabouts of Khrushchev. Came the reply, Khrushchev was at the U. N. in New York. The warning kept on flashing, but Slemon decided there would be no attack on the United States while Khrushchev was in New York. He did not push the button. Later, he found that the early warning system had been picking up radar beams from the moon.

This is how close Canadian-American cooperation works at the defense level, and how much the two countries are interdependent.

Missiles in Cuba?

DEFENSE SECRETARY Robert McNamara indirectly chided Sen. Kenneth Keating (R-N. Y.), but he was much more direct in criticizing another Republican, Rep. Frank Osmers of New Jersey, in secret testimony on the alleged Soviet "build-up" in Cuba.

The Secretary really bristled when Osmers cross-examined him on whether Keating "didn't have some solid grounds" for claiming that Cuban armaments were much greater than the Defense Department estimates.

"After all, some of the defensive weapons in Cuba are potentially offensive and could actually be used both ways, couldn't they?" asked the New Jersey Congressman.

"Of course not, unless there was an amphibious capability to get them off the island in some kind of an invading force," snapped McNamara.

He added that there were no intermediate-range missiles now in Cuba, but that Castro had defensive missiles similar to our Corporal or Sergeant, that might have been mistaken for longer-range weapons by uninformed observers "spreading irresponsible information in the United States.

"Naturally, some of these defensive weapons are being stored in caves, which doesn't make them more effective," said the Secretary.

"Well, if we had better intelligence on Cuba there would be less of what you call irresponsible information," challenged Osmers.

"That's your opinion," snapped McNamara. "I think we have excellent intelligence on Cuba and the best possible surveillance of its military strength from day to day. If we have fallen down on the job, Mr. Osmers, perhaps you will tell us how and where. I welcome any criticism if it is supported by facts."

"Yes, there has been too much sniping and too little evidence so far," interrupted Chairman Carl Vinson of Georgia. "I suggest that the gentleman from New Jersey come up with facts."

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